From: Housing.Counseling

Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 8:49 AM
To: 'SF-HOUSING-COUNSELING-L@hudlist.hud.gov'

Subject: HUD - Policy Clarification on Housing Counseling Work Plan

Requirement

To: All Agencies Participating in HUD's Housing Counseling Program

As we start the new fiscal year, the Office of Single Family Housing would like to clarify that all agencies participating in HUD's Housing Counseling Program must comply with the housing counseling work plan requirement, as it is essential to maintaining your status as a participating agency.

Prior to the issuance of Final Rule 24 CFR 214 in September 2007, only local and Multi-State housing counseling agencies and Regional and National Intermediary Organizations were required to submit housing counseling plans as a condition of their initial application for approval.

With the passing of the Final Rule in 2007, there were two slight shifts in the work plan requirement: (1) all agencies participating in HUD's Housing Counseling Program must now maintain a counseling work plan as a condition program participation; and (2) the required elements of the work plan have been slightly redefined.

To ensure that agencies fully understand this transition in policy, this notice is being issued to clarify that the housing counseling work plan requirement applies to all participating agencies. In accordance with 24 CFR 214.3 (8) (ii) participating agencies are defined as all housing counseling and intermediary organizations participating in HUD's Housing Counseling program, that includes HUD-approved housing counseling agencies and affiliates and branches of HUD-approved Intermediaries, HUD-approved Multi-State Organizations and State Housing Finance Agencies.

Therefore, if one does not currently exist, your agency (including branches and affiliates) must develop a housing counseling work plan that is unique to your agency's or branches' geographic target population and housing counseling service goals. To confirm that your work plan is in full compliance with the policy, please review the required criteria outlined below and if necessary update your plan accordingly.

The work plan must always contain current and accurate information while you are a participating agency. Whenever, the plan is changed or amended, HUD must be notified. The work plan is critical in keeping HUD informed of changes or new developments with your organization's goals, objectives and counseling services offered.

All participating agencies should maintain a copy of the agency's work plan on-site at all times. As a requirement of the Housing Counseling Program's performance review process, HUD staff will briefly review your agency's work plan when conducting an on-site review.

Please note that in accordance with 24 CFR 214.103 (m), counseling work plans submitted at the time of application must address following the criteria in detail:

- 1. Needs and problems of the target population;
- 2. How the agency will address one or more of these needs and problems with its available resources;
- 3. The type of housing counseling services offered;
- 4. Agency's fee structure, if applicable;
- 5. The geographical area to be served; and
- 6. The anticipated outcomes to be achieved within the period of approval.

The plan must be updated if changes occur to any of the criteria listed above. If you have questions, please contact your assigned HUD Government Technical Representative.

Thanks,

Director, Program Support Division Office of Single Family Housing